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ABSTRACT

Inservice programs that are likely to accomplish their objectives are characterized by: (1) differentiated training experiences; (2) teachers in active roles; (3) an emphasis on demonstration, supervised trials, and feedback; (4) sharing and mutual assistance; (5) activities linked to a general effort of the school; (6) teachers who choose goals for themselves; and (7) self-initiated, self-directed training activities. This study compared these desirable program characteristics as they existed in both centralized (district-based) programs and decentralized (school-based) programs. A survey conducted in 128 schools in Texas revealed greater overall satisfaction with programs classified as decentralized than with those identified as centralized. Recommendations are offered for general improvement of inservice programs. A copy of the survey instrument is appended. (JD)

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A Comparison of Centralized and Decentralized Inservice Education Programs. Teacher Involvement, Program Characteristics, and Job Satisfaction

A paper presented before the Fifth Annual National Council of States on Inservice Education Conference on December 8, 1980, in San Diego, California.

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While serving as the inservice coordinator for a Teacher Corps program out of the University of Texas and the Austin Independent School District for two years, between 1976 and 1978, it became extremely obvious to me that, for most teachers, inservice education carried a very definite negative connotation. Almost all of the teachers I came in contact with had little reliance on in-service activities as a means to obtain additional skills or even improve on existing ones. It was not uncommon at inservice sessions to see several teachers grading papers, planning lessons, or otherwise reading or doing other kinds of homework, while a paid consultant lectured to a large group of bodies of whom very few were tuned-in to what was being said.

I also observed blank stares, dozing off, gazing out of windows and even a few frowns. If this is an indication of what was occurring at our inservice meetings, then not very much was taking place.

Not satisfied that what I was observing was actually common-place all over the United States, I took a 30-day leave of absence in July of 1977 and buried myself in the university library to do an extensive ERIC search on every descriptor which had "inservice education" as part of its title. I discovered a little over 1000 sources, 718 of which I perused or read in detail to find out what was really happening in the field. I also reviewed ten years of dissertation abstracts (1968 - 1978) on topics having anything to do with inservice education.

Generally speaking, this literature search revealed a great deal of non-effective inservice programs. Quite obviously, I also read about inservice programs which were effective and, according to their reports, from which teachers did upgrade their teaching skills. But for the most part the inservice programs did not possess the desired program management characteristics (Lawrence, 1974) nor was there sufficient evidence of teacher involvement or any job satisfaction.

Program Management Characteristics: Lawrence (1974) posited that "...inservice programs that incorporated more of the seven desirable characteristics would have a greater likelihood of realizing their objectives." Through research Lawrence's findings supported all seven propositions. These are:

1. Inservice programs that have differentiated training experiences for different teachers are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programs that have common activities for all participants.

2. Inservice programs that place the teacher in an active role constructing and generating materials, ideas and behaviors are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programs that place the teacher in a receptive role.

3. Inservice programs that emphasize demonstrations, supervised trials and feedback are more likely to accomplish their goals than are programs in which the teacher is expected to store up ideas and behavior prescriptions for a future time.

4. Inservice programs in which teachers share and provide mutual assistance to each other are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programs in which each teacher does separate work.

5. Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice activities that are linked to a general effort of the school than they are from single shot programs that are not part of a general staff development plan.

6. Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice programs in which they can choose goals and objectives for themselves, as contrasted with programs in which the goals and objectives are preplanned.

7. Self-initiated and self-directed training activities are seldom used in inservice programs, but this pattern is associated with successful accomplishment of program goals.

Teacher Involvement: Perhaps the most often mentioned requirement for effective inservice programs is the participation of teachers in all aspects of these activities. The literature teems with cries for a greater involvement on the part of teachers. Some excerpts from authentic and well researched studies are:

> "No one asks the teacher about anything --and about professional development even less." (Lanoue and Smith, 1973: 46)

> "For most inservice activities, elementary and secondary teachers favor teacher planned activities over administrator-planned activities." (Borgeault, 1970: 3822A)

> "The difference between a good program and a poor program may lie in the emphasis and what people bring to the sessions rather than the caliber of the outside lecturers. If teachers participate or become involved, then the more significant problems are likely to be dealt with." (Wilson, 1972: 45)

Perhaps the strongest bid for teacher participation is made by Bush

(1973), and his rationale calling for teachers having a major say in their professional training is quite unique. Bush is concerned with the supervisory-subordinate relationship of principal-teacher interaction. He concurs with the growing list of supporters who claim that teachers are the most reliable judges of their own technical weaknesses. Bush also calls misleading the judgement by principals that most teachers have a myopic review of what teaching can be, while still conceding that there is some truth to this but only enough to be misinterpreted.

Bush believes the administrator is in too strong an authoritative role with his responsibility for deciding dismissal and tenure of teachers to be able to have a collegial relationship with his teachers and to also play a role as an impartial expert who can help with the diagnosis of instructional problems.

Other well known educators who have continued calling for greater teacher involvement include Harris and Bessent (1969), Jackson (1973), Lippitt and Fox (1973) and Edelfelt and Johnson (1975). There are many, many more, of course.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is defined as the pleasurable state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating one's job values (Locke, 1969). Porter (1963) stated it simply as the difference between what a person thinks he should receive and what he feels he actually does receive. Job satisfaction is greatly enhanced for workers when they have autonomy in decision. Blauner (1960) summarizes the sociological literature on job satisfaction thusly: "It is possible to generalize on the basis of the evidence that the greater the degree of control that a worker has, either in a single dimension or as a total composite, the greater his job satisfaction." Blau and Scott (1962) reported that job satisfaction is increased when workers use their own discretion.

Likert (1961) identified four different types of organizations and theorizes on the type of satisfaction workers derive from each of them. Labeling them "systems". Likert listed them as follows:

System # 1 - Exploitative Authoritative
System # 2 - Benevolent Authoritative
System # 3 - Consultative
System # 4 - Participative Group

In System # 1, workers are usually dissatisfied with membership in the organization, supervision, and with one's own achievement. System #2 work-

ers' feelings range from dissatisfaction to moderate satisfaction with regard to membership in the organization, supervision, and one's own achievement. System # 3 workers derive some dissatisfaction but mostly gain moderately high satisfaction with regard to membership in the organization and one's own achievement. Workers in System # 4 feel relatively high satisfaction throughout the organization with regard to membership, supervision, and one's own achievement.

The list of proponents for higher involvement on the part of workers is very long. They include: Blumber (1969), Bidwell (1956), Argyle (1972), Shipton and Belisle (1956), Moeller and Charters (1965) and Holdaway (1977). (Note: During the actual presentation, a little information about each of these sources will be stated.)

THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to make a comparison of the desirable program characteristics, the extent of involvement, and the extent of job satisfaction of teachers in both centralized or district-based and decentralized or school-based inservice programs. Program characteristics and teacher involvement and job satisfaction in connection with the inservice program were classified as dependent variables. Centralization and decentralization were employed as intervening variables as well as independent variables along with other indicators as whether elementary or secondary, teaching experience, and so on.

Dependent Variable: Items seventeen through twenty-five of the questionnaire generated the data to test the hypotheses that there is no significant difference between centralized and decentralized inservice programs in the degree to which the desirable program characteristics have been incorporated. (See Attached Survey Instrument)

Items one through six of the questionnaire solicited data to test the hypotheses that there is no significant difference between centralized and decentralized inservice programs in the extent of teacher involvement in the listed areas. (See Attached Survey Instrument)

Items thirty-three through forty-two provided the data to test the hypotheses that there is no significant difference between centralized and decentralized inservice programs in the extent of job satisfaction of teachers and school or building level personnel in connection with the inservice program. (See Attached Survey Instrument)

At this point, some comments will be made about the process used to test the survey instrument for validity and for reliability.

Analysis: The statistical test used to analyze the results of the survey was the Chi square (X^2) test. Significance was determined at the.05 level

Time permitting, comments will be made about the chi square test at this time.

Participating Schools: The survey was conducted in 125 Texas public schools, representing an aggregate of 88, 824 students grades K-12. There were, potentially, 1400 respondents representing 5,431 educators. Of these, the great majority were teachers, since the participating schools were all public schools. Of the 193 school districts asked to participate, 140 (72%) responded affirmatively. Of the 140 schools receiving questionnaires, 125 (89%) responded affirmatively. Of 1400 questionnaires mailed, 1025 response forms were received, representing 73% of those requested to participate.

Findings: It will be shown that, when tests of hypotheses based on the established criteria were taken, all but one dependent variable (...demonstrations) were rejected. The established criteria for naming a program as being either centralized or decentralized precluded any programs being identified as "decentralized." Not a single inservice program from the 125 schools which partcipated could be said to be teacher or principal controlled. Thus, based on the study, and the study was conducted in a true random, sample approach by utilizing the Monte Carlo method for selecting participants at random, there are no decentralized inservice programs out in the field.

The comparison was made by classifying each response form as being representative of one program or the other. This could be done because, individually, there were 56 response forms which warranted the classification of "decentralized" --even though there were response forms from the same school districts which resulted in being classified as centralized or a third classification which emerged, "participatory", that is, those response forms which, after application of weighted scores for participation in policy and work decisions, are rated as neither centralized or decentralized because of closeness of overall score and, thus, are considered having elements of both programs. The breakdown of the 1011 usable forms was as follows: 853 centralized; 56 decentralized and 102 participatory.

Thus, the study became a "perceptual study." Still, as mentioned above, and according to perceptions of participants, all the null hypotheses were rejected but one. And, in all cases, the frequency of occurrence for the desirable program characteristics, the involvement of teachers in all the stated areas, and the amount of job satisfaction in the ten identified areas, was greater for the response forms classified as decentralized or participatory than for those identified as centralized.

At this point, several examples will be shown with the use of transparencies.

General Findings: Utilizing the test for coefficient of contigency (C), it was found that, in all cases, weak associations existed for all relationships between dependent and independent variables. The C value for program characteristics never exceeded .30 and was more frequently under .20. For teacher involvement the C value never reacher higher than .38; for job satisfaction no C value was higher than .26. Any association between variables of less than .60 but higher than .40 is considered moderate. In order to be considered significant the C value must be higher than .60. None were found that high in this study.

Because of the questions, however, a number of very interesting responses were noted. Among them are:

More than two thirds of all teachers, at all grade levels, are not consistently involved in inservice education other than being required to attend.

The most often mentioned program characteristic in which teachers are not involved is the selection of goals and objectives.

One third of all respondents are dissatisfied with inservice programs at their schools or school districts. One third are only fairly satisfied. One of every twelve teachers indicated "enthusiasm " over their program.

Principals, when asked the frequency of their involvement in inservice activities at their schools, and given a choice of saying never, seldom, sometimes, often or always, stated "sometimes" more often than any other.

Recommendations: The following are among the recommendations made by the author of this study:

A concentrated effort to involve teachers in their inservice program.
A re-thinking of the demand to make principals true instructional leaders.
Establishment of the "teacher educator" concept.
Conduct inservice training during regular working hours.
Inservice training should be for everyone.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

PART ONE: The response key for items 1 through 32 is as follows: Never = Ne; Seldom = Se; Sometimes = St; Often = Of; Always = Aw; No Response/No Opinion = No. Use the answer sheet for your responses.

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1. How frequently are teachers involved in planning activities for the inservice program ?
2. How frequently are teachers involved in presenting or leading activities in the inservice program ?
3. How frequently are teachers involved in evaluating activities of the inservice program ?
4. How frequently are teachers involved in the selection of consultants for the inservice program ?
5. How frequently are teachers involved in establishing policies for the inservice program ?
6. How frequently do teachers provide input into decisions that allocate funds to be expended in the overall inservice program
7. How frequently do professional central office staff participate in decisions determining the goals and objectives of the inservice program ?
8. How frequently do professional central office staff participate in decisions on the selection of consultants or presenters to the inservice education activities ?
9. How frequently do professional central office staff participate in decisions on the adoption of new policies of the inservice education program ?
10. How frequently do professional central office staff participate in decisions on the adoption of new inservice education programs ?
11. How frequently do principals participate in decisions determining the goals and objectives of the inservice program ?
12. How frequently do principals participate in decisions on the selection of consultants or presenters to the inservice education program ?
13. How frequently do principals participate in decisions on the adoption of new policies of the inservice education program ?
14. How frequently do principals participate in decisions on the adoption of new inservice education programs ?
15. How frequently do teachers make decisions concerning the inservice education program without first having to obtain approval of those decisions from a central office administrator, supervisor, or learning coordinator ?
16. How frequently are even small matters about the inservice education program referred to someone from the central office for a final answer ?
17. How frequently is the training directed at the individual teacher instead of the overall participants of the inservice program ?
18. How frequently do teachers play an active role in constructing or generating materials during the inservice activities ?
19. How frequently do teachers play an active role in generating ideas and behaviors during the inservice activities ?
20. How frequently does the inservice program emphasize demonstrations by the consultants or presenters ?
21. How frequently does the inservice program emphasize supervised trials, or guided practices, as conducted by the consultants or presenters ?

22. How frequently does the inservice program emphasize feedback to teachers after their participation in demonstrations and supervised trials or guided practices ?

23. How frequently are the inservice activities a part of the local school overall staff development plan ?

24. How frequently does the faculty select its own inservice education goals and objectives ?

25. How frequently does the inservice education program involve sharing of ideas among teachers ?

26. How frequently must any decision you make regarding the inservice education program be approved by a central office administrator, supervisor, or learning coordinator ?

Using the same response key, please answer questions 27 through 32 based on HOW OFTEN YOU THINK THEY SHOULD OCCUR (not how often they occur now)

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27. How frequently should teachers be involved in planning activities for the inservice program ?

28. How frequently should teachers be involved in presenting or leading activities in the inservice program ?

29. How frequently should teachers be involved in evaluating activities of the inservice program ?

30. How frequently should teachers be involved in the selection of consultants for the inservice program ?

31. How frequently should teachers be involved in establishing policies for the inservice program ?

32. How frequently should teachers provide input into decisions that allocate funds to be expended in the overall inservice program ?

PART TWO: The response key for items 33 through 42 is as follows: Enthusiastic = E; Satisfied = S; Fairly Satisfied = FS; Somewhat Dissatisfied = SD; Dissatisfied = D; Very Dissatisfied = VD; No Response/No Opinion = No.

How satisfied are you with each of the following:

33. Your relationship with fellow staff and faculty members in connection with the inservice program ?

34. Your relationship with the principal and other local school building administrators in connection with the inservice program ?

35. Your relationship with central office administrators, supervisors, and/or learning coordinators in connection with the inservice program ?

36. Your role in the identification and development of goals and objectives pertaining to the inservice program ?

37. The inservice education experiences made available to you for your professional growth ?

38. The level of your involvement in the overall inservice education program ?

39. The level of involvement of central office administrators, supervisors and/or learning coordinators in the overall inservice program ?

40. The level of involvement of the principal and other local school building administrators in the overall inservice program ?

41. Your level of involvement in the determination of overall funding of the inservice program ?

42. The impact the inservice program has had on the improvement of your teaching ability ?